TL120

ACTIVITIES AND AIMS OF "COORDINAMENTO ITALIANO DEI GRUPPI DI SOLIDARIETA' CON TIMOR EST"

In 1986 an Italian group of pacifists called "Comitato di Ferrara per la pace"(engaged on peace and disarmament subjects - in Italy - and on solidarity with Palestine and South-Africa peoples) began to deepen its knowledge about the situation in East-Timor, during meetings with "La lega italiana per i diritti dei popoli".

In the same year the Committee organized, together with Ferrara Christian groups, a fasting-day in Ferrara, to raise awareness on the tragic situation of the Timorese people.

The Committe, creating a National Coordination with "Servizio Civile Internazionale" (a voluntary work association, with branches and partners in 70 Countries, involved in peace, solidarity, emargination, ecology activities), began solidarity activities for East-Timor, directed to different targets:

1. Institutions (Local and National);
2. Mass-media
3. Grass root groups and NGOs
4. Civil Society groups

Since 1989, "solidarity tours for East-Timor", have been organized by Servizio Civile Internazionale, in cooperation with Comitato di Ferrara per la pace and "Centro Informazione Educazione allo Sviluppo".
These tours are "transversal" activities: addressed to all targets.
Since then,"Timor tours", joined by volunteers coming from all over the world, have touched 35 towns from North to South Italy.

The main result obtained by these tours has been contacting grass root groups and local institutions; many of which have continued, in different ways, to be active on East-Timor issue.
Many Local Bodies have subscribed appeals and solidarity documents to national and international institutions.

During tours, material concerning information on East-Timor has been spread out and an exhibition concerning the Timorese situation has been preapared.
In 1991 and 1992 S.C.I. volunteers performed open-air theatre actions on the streets, using body language as a way to communicate the everyday tragedy of East-Timor people.

1.INSTITUTIONS

Besides local institutions (Municipalities and Provinces), some Italian Members of Parliament have appealed for investigation and clarification by Italian and European Parliaments.

MP Melandri, Taradash, Napoletano (together with others) have presented ACP-EEC Joint Assembly a resolution (26 SEptember 1990);

MP Crippa, Ciabarri, Galbeggiani e Mammone (Italian Communist Party) have presented a resolution proposal to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. The resolution has been partly endorsed by the Committee (21 February 1991);

MP Trabacchini, Ciabarri, Lauricella, Evangelisti (Left Party) presented a question to the Foreign Affairs Minister (16 December 1992;

MP Crippa C. and Ronchi (Greens Party) presented Council President a question (29 July 1992);

MP Trabacchini, Ciabarri, Lauricella, Evangelisti presented another question to the Foreign Affairs Minister (8 March 1993).

Three sit-in were organized in Rome, two on the occasion of the invasion anniversary and one on the occasion of diplomatic conversations between Boutros Ghali and Foreign Affairs Ministers from Portugal and Indonesia, in April 1993.

2. MASS-MEDIA

Overcoming the Italian mass-media indifference about Timorese issue has not been easy.

Most journalists showed interest into the matter only on occasions of Pope visit to Dili and (a bit less) of Santa Cruz massacre.
On both occasions, Italian groups of solidarity were required by some journalists, to provide more detailed information, becouse of lack of a specific file on the issue.
Centro Informazione Educazione allo Sviluppo edited two "Country-sheet" about East-Timor; Servizio Civile Internazionale and Comitato di Ferrara per la pace two bibliographic reviews; DISVI Haromak bulletin.

In particular, links have been settled with National Television (RAI 3), National Radio (Radio 3) and Radio Radicale, that broadcasted programmes about East Timor, with daily newspaper "Il Manifesto", with weekly "Avvenimenti".
"Guerre e pace", a monthly review of the pacifist Italian movement,has a column, under the care of the Italian Coordination, concerning East Timor issue; many articles have been edited by "Senzaconfine"; another monthly review.

Other national and, mainly, local newspapers, published articles about East Timor, on occasion of specific initiatives.

3.GRASS ROOT GROUPS

Apart form "Timor tour", in these years many initiatives have been organized to inform and raise awareness on people. In particular, on occasion of invasion anniversaries, fasting-days, meetings, sit-in have been organized.

In total, 5Ø towns have been involved in initiatives about East Timor.
Three NGOs (Servizio Civile Internazionale, Disarmo Sviluppo, Centro Informazione Educazione allo Sviluppo) are members of the Coordinating Body, other four (Centro Volontari Marchigiani, Mani Tese '76, Associazione per i Popoli Minacciati, Movimento Cristiano per la pace)cooperate with it frequently.

Many(2Ø, more or less) grass root groups, engaged in solidarity actions, have been involved.

In particular, the Coordinating Body keeps in touch with the "Gesellschaft fur bedrohte Volker" South-Tirol section and with groups of solidarity with Sahrawi people.

PROPOSALS OF THE COORDINATING BODY

Next September, Servizio Civile Internazionale will organize two "Timor tours", one in the North and one in the South of Italy.

The final result of volunteers work and discussions will be the realization of a sheet concerning East Timor issue and our activities in Italy, to be proposed to all the other European branches and partners. We think it would be meaningful to encourage other S.C.I.organizations to carry on initiatives about East Timor.

The realization of a solidarity project to support Timorese students is one of our proposals - as a Coordinating Body - for the future;we have taken into consideration the Japanese project for Darwin school.

A structural problem of the Coordinating Body comes from the fact that all groups, associations, committes, don't work only on East Timor, but also on other issues.
The positive aspect of this situation is the possibility to link this issue with similar ones, working on a parallel way, with the aim to give oppressed peoples support.

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